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THE CONCORD
MINUTE MAN

...By...

GEORGE TOLMAN



CONCORD ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY BUILDING

THE
CONCORD MINUTE MEN

READ BEFORE THE
CONCORD ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

MARCH 4, 1901

BY GEORGE TOLMAN
Secretary of the Society

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THE CONCORD MINUTE MEN.

MARCH, 1901.

IT will perhaps be remembered that at the January meeting of this Society, I mentioned that the original muster roll of Capt. Charles Miles' Concord Company of Minute Men, that was engaged at the North Bridge on the 19th of April, 1775, was about to be sold at the auction of the Dr. Charles E. Clark collection in Boston, and that I purposed to make as high a bid for it as I thought the Society would stand. It is perhaps unnecessary now to remark that I did not get it, although my representative went higher for it than I, with the natural conservatism of old age, should have ventured, and the precious document was at last knocked down to a New York publishing house for \$275. Of course they expect to make money on it, and the ultimate destination of this roll, which ought never to have left the Town of Concord, will be the private library of some millionaire collector, or the cabinet of some historical society that can afford to make a permanent investment of its funds in historical documents of this sort. Of one thing, however, we may be reasonably confident, and that is the future safety of this important and interesting paper. It can never be lost or destroyed, or left disregarded to turn up at some time in the distant future, in a second-hand book

shop at the price of a shilling, for its value has now been permanently fixed at above a minimum of \$275, and not only will its present possessors take every care for its preservation, but also, if it ever comes upon the market again, numbers of anxious collectors will be ready to compete, at still higher figures, for the privilege of taking equal care of it forever. If the Concord Antiquarian Society, or its representative at the sale, had wanted to buy the document as a speculation—to sell it again at an advanced figure—it might have afforded to raise the bluff still higher, but of course this idea is quite out of the question, for it would have been a point of honor, if the paper could possibly have been brought back to Concord, that it should have remained here forever.

But it was only about twenty-five years ago, at or near the time of the centennial celebration of Concord Fight, that Dr. Clark offered to sell this same document for twenty-five dollars to Concord. I remember the incident quite distinctly, and also that the Doctor showed me the paper,—as also some other Concord papers (to be spoken of later) that had come into his possession. I had no funds to buy it with, but the matter was referred to some of the principal public-spirited men of the town (I have the impression that it was to the Trustees of the Public Library, but I am not confident on that point), and they concluded that it was not worth while to invest, and not dignified to buy on speculation, so the purchase was not made.

Dr. Clark was at that time just beginning his collection of American portraits, prints, autographs,

etc., especially of those connected with the period of the Revolution,—or rather, he was just beginning to be *known* as a collector, for, as he told me, he had been from his boyhood addicted to picking up such things as he could find them, an easier thing to do then, and earlier, than it is now—and in the following years he got together a mass of such material, hardly equalled by any collection in the country, so large, indeed, that the catalogue comprised over 2,000 numbers, and it took three days to dispose of them by auction. I think from watching a part of the sale that, considered merely as a money-making business, it would hardly have been possible for him to have invested in any recognized mercantile business the same money he put into this collection, in the same amounts and at the same times, and to have realized so great a profit from his investment.

Since the Society's last meeting, perhaps on account of the sale of this very document, I have had inquiries from three different persons, in widely separated places, as to the Concord Minute Men, of whom there is no list in the Massachusetts Revolutionary archives at the State House, though there are rolls of all the minute men who turned out from other towns on the 19th of April, 1775. *Obiter dictu*, these rolls are docketed and indexed "Lexington Alarm" lists, when in point of fact Lexington was only an incident in the affair of that date. Concord was the objective point of General Gage's raid into the country, and Lexington, as well as Cambridge and Menotomy, happened to be on the road that led thither. Nobody in the whole

Province was alarmed about Lexington,—everybody was anxious for Concord and the precious war material there deposited, the very heart and vitals of the incipient rebellion. The minute men of Essex and Worcester and Middlesex, when they turned out that morning, turned out for the defense of Concord, not of Lexington; they all knew where Concord was and the road that led to it, but outside of our own county, it is doubtful if one minute man in a dozen had ever heard of Lexington, or at any rate could tell whether it was north, south, east, or west of Concord. (I always think it my duty to protest the claims of Lexington, even though the official archives of the Commonwealth appear as her indorser.) The reason that the list of Concord Minute Men does not appear in the so-called "Lexington Alarm" lists, however, is not as might perhaps appear to a superficial observer, because Concord was not alarmed about the safety of Lexington. It was because, some years after the event, an appropriation of money was made to pay the men who had rushed to the defense of Concord for their military service and travel, and the Captains from all over the Province sent in their properly attested muster rolls, most, if not all, of which have been preserved to this day. Concord paid her own soldiers, and though I know of no other enlistment roll than this one of which I have been speaking, the names of nearly all of them appear in the Town's records, scattered along through several pages, as they were paid by the Town Treasurer from time to time, but not so arranged as to make it certain what particular company any individual soldier belonged to.

One of my correspondents appears to be a little confused by the following paragraph, which he quotes from Shattuck's "History of Concord," page 110:—

"There were at this time in this vicinity, under rather imperfect organization, a regiment of militia and a reg't of minute men. The officers of the militia were James Barrett, Col.; Nathan Barrett and Geo. Minott of Concord Captains," [and others from other towns whom it is not necessary to name here]. "The officers of the minute men were Abijah Pierce of Lincoln, Col.; Thos. Nixon of Framingham, Lt. Col.; John Buttrick and Jacob Miller, Majors; Thos. Hurd of Ea. Sudbury, Adj't; David Brown and Chas. Miles of Concord, Isaac Davis of Acton, Wm. Smith of Lincoln, Jonathan Wilson of Bedford, John Nixon of Sudbury, Captains. The officers of the minute men had no commissions; their authority was derived solely from the suffrages of their companions. Nor were any of the companies formed in regular order" [*i.e.*, as the line was formed on the hill by Lieut. Joseph Hosmer, acting as Adjutant].

Our common use of the word "militia" to designate a certain organized, disciplined, and uniformed force, such as is called in most of the States the "National Guard," is responsible for this confusion. The "militia," then as now, was the entire body of citizens of military age (with certain exceptions, such as clergymen and paupers, for instance). This body of militia was mustered and paraded one or more times in the year, under officers whose commissions ran in the name of the King, and were signed by the royal Governor. They were then, as now, a part of the authorized forces of the govern-

ment, liable to be called out *en masse*, or by means of a draft, at the call of the constituted authorities. Many of us remember how in the late Civil War, a draft was made from the militia of the United States, to fill up the depleted army. The same process of drafting from the militia had been followed in the various Indian wars of the Colony, and later, in the Province wars of the eighteenth century. The custom of mustering the militia annually or semi-annually continued until about half a century ago, until it became an object of popular ridicule and degenerated simply to burlesque, when it was very properly discontinued. I remember in my boyhood that the walls of my grandfather's shop were papered with citations, calling him and his workmen and apprentices to military duty. He was merely a militia man, and *his* citations called upon him as "being duly *enrolled*" . . . "to appear armed and equipped," while Clark Munroe, who worked for him, being a member of the Light Infantry, a "chartered company," was cited as "duly *enlisted*" . . . "to appear armed, equipped and uniformed."

Long before the outbreak of actual hostilities in 1775, General Gage, acting Governor of the Province, had become suspicious of the militia. He had the authority to call them out, whenever necessary, for the forcible suppression of mob violence, and the enforcement of law and order, exactly as the Governor of the Commonwealth has today. But in the then temper of the people he was inclined, as was Hotspur in the matter of the spirits, to ask "will they *come* when I do call for them?" and was obliged to acknowledge to himself that they most certainly

would not, or if they did, they would range themselves on the side of revolution rather than on that of the established legal authorities. So, as far as possible, the assembling of the militia was prevented, and the annual musterings were discontinued. Even "the chartered companies," answering somewhat to our "Volunteer Militia" or "National Guard" of today, were frowned upon, and as far as possible disarmed, though they did manage to save to themselves some pieces of artillery, the property of the Province, which afterward did their duty in the provincial army. The commissions of the militia officers were revoked in some few cases, but for the most part had not been recalled. Practically these commissions were all that was left of the organization of the militia of the Province, months before the 19th of April, 1775, and owing to the long discontinuance of "trainings," it was simply this skeleton of a few commissions that formed the "Regiment of Militia under rather imperfect organization," and commanded by Col. James Barrett, of which Shattuck speaks.

The throttling, by Governor Gage, of the General Court, the constitutional legislature of the Province, led to the assembling in Concord on the 11th of October, 1774, of a body of delegates chosen from the several towns in the same manner as the Representatives in General Court were chosen, and for much the same purposes as were the deliberations and actions of that body. This new body of delegates called itself a Provincial Congress, and held three sessions: the first, of five days in October, at Concord; the second, of two weeks in the same

month; and the third, of nearly three weeks in November and December, at Cambridge. One of the first proceedings of this body was to take into consideration the disorganized condition of the militia, and to take measures to form a new force, under its own orders, and independent of the royal governor. The committee's report on this matter, which was adopted unanimously, sets forth that, whereas a formidable body of troops are already arrived at the metropolis of the Province, and more are on the way, with the express design of subverting the constitution of the Province; and whereas the Governor has attempted to use his troops against the inhabitants of Salem, and has fortified Boston against the country, and has unlawfully seized upon and kept certain arms and ammunition provided at the public cost for the use of the Province, "at the same time having neglected and altogether disregarded the assurances from this Congress of the pacific disposition of the inhabitants of this Province," . . . "notwithstanding that the Province has not the most distant design of attacking, annoying or molesting his Majesty's troops aforesaid"—in view of all these things a Committee of Safety shall be appointed, who shall, among other powers and duties, "have power and they are hereby directed whenever they shall judge it necessary for the safety and defense of the inhabitants of this Province and their property, to alarm, muster and cause to be assembled, with the utmost expedition, and completely armed, accoutred and supplied with provisions sufficient for their support in their march to the place of rendezvous, such and so many of

the militia as they shall judge necessary for the ends aforesaid, and at such place or places as they shall judge proper, and them to discharge as soon as the safety of this Province shall permit."

Other resolutions provided for the purchase of arms, ammunition, provisions and all kinds of military stores, and for their accumulation and care at Concord and Worcester. The new force was to be "enlisted" to the number of at least one fourth of the militia. That is to say, it was to comprise one fourth of the men of military age in the Province, and was to be raised not by a draft, but by voluntary enlistment. This was practically necessary. There were, as the Congress well knew, and as subsequent events amply proved, very many citizens who were opposed to the action of the Congress, and to any measures which looked like forcible resistance to the established government, even though they might not entirely approve of the course of Governor Gage and the constituted authorities. It was to keep these citizens quiet and to stifle their objections to measures that were plainly revolutionary, and that in the very nature of things must lead inevitably to open hostilities, that the Congress declared that it "will consider all measures tending to prevent a reconciliation between Britain and these Colonies, as the highest degree of enmity to the Province." The committee that drew up this resolution, and the Congress that adopted it, knew perfectly well that the very measures they were taking would tend and were tending to "prevent a reconciliation between Britain and her Colonies." They knew also that in the clash of arms for which they

were preparing with such feverish haste, it would be imperatively necessary that they should have a military force on which they could depend, a force of men who had taken up arms of their own volition, and with full knowledge that such taking of arms might, and almost certainly would, lead to open rebellion and treason. So, by the process of voluntary enlistment in the new force, the Congress weeded out the loyalists from the ranks of the militia, and assured itself of an army that could be relied upon, made up of men who knew the risk that they were assuming.

It was this force of men to which the name of Minute Men was applied. This appears to have been at first a popular name for the force, doubtless derived from the terms of the enlistment paper, which was as follows:—

I. We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, will to the utmost of our power defend His Majesty King George the Third, his person, crown and dignity.

II. We will at the same time, to the utmost of our power and abilities, defend all and every of our charter rights, liberties and privileges; and will hold ourselves in readiness *at a minute's warning*, with arms and ammunition thus to do.

III. We will *at all times and in all places* obey our officers chosen by us, and our superior officers, in ordering and disciplining us, when and where said officers shall think proper.

These terms of enlistment were drawn up by a committee of this Town of Concord, and reported to a town meeting, January 9, 1775, on which date

and at which meeting the town voted to pay each "minute man" at a certain rate *per diem* for ten months. This is the first use of the word "minute man" that I have been able to find in any officially recorded document or record of proceedings, from which fact I am led to infer that the word was coined in Concord; a happy inspiration of some one of our local patriots, to distinguish this yet-to-be-created army of volunteers, and that the appositeness and significance of the term caused it to spread all over the Province, from this great centre and vital spot of the organization of the revolutionary movement.

If I am correct in this inference (and I am fairly sure that I am), to Concord belongs not only the honor of being the spot on which "was made the first forcible resistance to British aggression," but also of being the birthplace of the very *name* which for 125 years has been the synonym for a soldier of liberty. The term "minute man" appears for the first time on the records of the Provincial Congress, in the minutes of its proceedings of April 10, 1775, when that body was sitting in Concord, but little more than a week before the minute men received their "baptism of fire."

Mr. Shattuck informs us that on Thursday, January 12, 1775, a meeting was held to enlist the men, under the articles that I have just read, at which the Rev. Wm. Emerson preached a sermon from Psalms lxiii: 2, and about sixty enlisted. They couldn't do anything in those days except with the concomitance of more or less preaching, but I confess I am not theologian enough, nor soldier enough,

to see the peculiar appositeness to the occasion, of the text, "To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary," and if Shattuck were not so thoroughly trustworthy in theological matters, albeit sometimes a little bit shaky in historical statements, I should be inclined to fancy that he had cited the wrong chapter and verse.

However, this date, January 12, 1775, and its story of sixty enlistments, brings us back once more to *our own* text, from which I fear we have widely divagated, the Muster Roll of Captain Charles Miles' Company. Doubtless his Company was the first one to be filled up, and includes the larger part of the sixty who enlisted on January 12—a circumstance which makes it doubly to be regretted that the original roll of honor of the Revolutionary War has passed irrevocably out of our possible possession. The document begins:—

"Concord, January 17th, 1775, then we chose our officers and settled the Company of Minute Men under the command of Capt. Charles Miles." Then follow the names which I will read here; though in general a list of names is uninteresting reading, still it is well to remember that *these* men were the pioneers, the very advance guard of that great army "which gave liberty to these United States;" They were: Captain, Charles Miles; Lieutenants, Jonathan Farrar and Francis Wheeler; Sergeants David Hartwell, Amos Hosmer, Silas Walker, Edward Richardson; Corporals, Simeon Hayward, Nathan Peirce, James Cogswell; Drummer, Daniel Brown; Fifer, Samuel Derby; Privates, Joseph Cleasby, Simeon Burrage, Israel Barrett, Daniel Hoar, Ephraim

Brooks, Wm. Burrage, Joseph Stratton, Stephen Brooks, Simon Wheeler, Ebenezer Johnson, Stephen Stearns, Wm. Brown, Jeremiah Clark, Jacob Ames, Benjamin Hosmer, Joel Hosmer, Samuel Wheeler, Wareham Wheeler, Oliver Wheeler, Jesse Hosmer, Amos Darby, Solomon Rice, Thaddeus Bancroft, Amos Melvin, Samuel Melvin, Nathan Dudley, Oliver Parlin, John Flag, Samuel Emery, John Cole, Daniel Cole, Barnabas Davis, Major Raly, Edward Wilkins, Daniel Farrar, Oliver Harris, Samuel Jewel, Daniel Wheat, John Corneall, Levi Hosmer.

There they are, fifty-two of them in all. You will have noticed how many of the *family* names are still upon our list of inhabitants,—how many of them are to be found also in Concord's latest list of young heroes and patriots, our boys who turned out at their country's call, less than three years ago. There are thirty-six family names in this muster roll of Captain Miles' Company, and of these, twenty-one are names of families that had been settled in Concord for more than one hundred years. Other old families (Buttrick, Flint, Hunt, Stow, Wood, Wright, for instance) are absent from *this* roll, but appear with full representation in the other companies that were formed about the same time.

Following the list of names I have just read, is a record of the meetings of the Company, twice a week until the end of February, giving the names of those who were "missing" at each meeting,—that is, of those who did not turn out for drill,—not many at any particular drill, showing quite distinctly the conscientious enthusiasm with which these young farmers applied themselves to the busi-

ness, unfamiliar to most of them, of learning the military exercise, and preparing to fire the celebrated "shot heard round the world"—which particular shot, by the way, I notice with great regret, the newspaper and magazine writers have lately been locating at Lexington. A separate slip of paper, attached to the record as above, and in the same handwriting, reads:—

"Concord, April 19, 1775, then the battel begune, then we ware caled away to Cambridg—and April the 20th then we was caled to arms to Concord—and April the 21 then we was caled to Arms to Concord—and April the 30 then we was cald to Cambridge—and May the 5, 1775, then we went on Gard and stood twenty four ours—May the 6, 1775 then went on Gard and stood twenty four ours, and found ourselves."

This standing on guard May 5 and 6 was, of course, at the camp at Cambridge, and was doubtless the last service performed by the Company; at all events, it finishes the record. From the fact that they had to "find" themselves on the last day—that is to say, that they were not furnished with rations from the camp—I infer that that day's service was "over time," as it were; that they remained on duty one day longer than they were absolutely required to. Most of the names in Captain Miles' roll appear immediately afterward in the muster roll of Captain Abishai Brown's Company, which was with the army at Cambridge until after the battle of Bunker Hill, as appears from the orderly book of Sergeant Nathan Stow. The name of "Minute Man" had by that time been outgrown; the men were no longer

emergency men; the flimsy and sophistical pretense, so long maintained by the Provincial Congress, of loyalty to the person and crown of George the Third had been once for all abandoned; the men in arms at Cambridge were officially recognized and spoken of as "the army;" henceforward there was to be no argument but war, no softening of terms and phrases, no veiling of rebellion and revolution under any equivoue, no peace but such as could be conquered.

It may perhaps be not out of the way to say that Captain Miles and his fifty-one men were not the only minute men of Concord. Another Company was raised by Captain David Brown at the same time and on the same terms of enlistment, and at a town meeting a few days later, it was reported that the number in both companies was just one hundred. The names of ninety-nine men appear on the town records as having been paid by the Town for their service as "minute men," but there are seven names in the list I have just read of Captain Miles' command that do not show in these lists of payments. Possibly there were also some men in Captain Brown's Company who did not trouble themselves to draw from the Town the few shillings to which they were entitled, but it is probable that the list of names here given is practically the muster roll of the company, which comprised:—David Brown, Captain; David Wheeler and Silas Man, Lieutenants; Abishai Brown, Emerson Cogswell and Amos Wood, Sergeants; Amos Barrett, Stephen Barrett, Reuben Hunt and Stephen Jones, Corporals; John Buttrick, Jr., Fifer, and Phineas

Alin, Humphrey Barrett, Jr., Elias Barron, Jonas Bateman, John Brown, Jr., Jonas Brown, Purchase Brown, Abiel Buttrick, Daniel Buttrick, Oliver Buttrick, Tilly Buttrick, Willard Buttrick, Wm. Buttrick, Daniel Cray, Amos Davis, Abraham Davis, Joseph Davis, Jr., Joseph Dudley, Charles Flint, Edward Flint, Edward Flint, Jr., Nathan Flint, Ezekiel Hagar, Isaac Hoar, David Hubbard, John Laughton, David Melvin, Jr., William Mercer, John Minot, Jr., Thos. Prescott, Bradbury Robinson, Ebenezer Stow, Nathan Stow, Thomas Thurston, Jotham Wheeler, Peter Wheeler, Zachary Wheeler, Ammi White, John White, Jonas Whitney, Aaron Wright. John Buttrick was a Major of Minute Men, and he completes, as far as is now possible, the list of Concord's soldiers who are entitled to that distinctive name.

This list is even more representative of Concord than is that of Captain Miles' company, for forty-one of the fifty-two names comprised in it are of members of the old Concord families, men whose ancestors had lived here for at least three generations.

There were also two companies of the regular "militia" in the town, which had charters and commissions under the royal authority, and which had all along maintained some degree of organization and were now recruited up to their full strength, before the organization of the minute men was begun. One of these was a "horse company," a relic of the old Indian fighting days, and this company, afterward as the Concord Light Infantry, kept up its existence under its old charter until about fifty years ago, when it was unfortunately disbanded, being at

the time of its disbandment the oldest chartered military company in New England, save and excepting only the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston. Of these two Concord militia companies, Nathan Barrett and George Minott were Captains; Joseph Hosmer, who acted as Adjutant at the Bridge, was a Lieutenant in one of them, and James Barrett was Colonel of the regiment to which they both belonged.

All these Concord companies, both of minute men and militia, were together *once*, before the 19th of April, 1775, viz.: on the 13th of March, and the battalion went through with some military exercises; of which, the one that seemed most important to be mentioned by the devout historian of Concord was the listening to a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Emerson from the text, "Behold God himself is with us for our Captain, and his Priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you," a highly appropriate text for a sermon just at that time: something on the lines of Cromwell's order to "trust in God, but keep your powder dry," only while Cromwell seemed to imply that the latter part of the order was of paramount importance, the minister, as perhaps bound by his priestly office, appears to rely much more upon his assurance of the divine favor than upon the practical matter of detail implied in the condition of the ammunition.

This 13th of March was a Sunday. It was on the very next Sunday,—the 20th—that two of General Gage's engineer officers visited Concord in disguise, and were entertained by the Hon. Daniel Bliss, with the result that, their business being dis-

covered, the second Sunday was hardly less full of excitement than the first.

When the line of the patriots came to be formed on the slope of Punkatasset Hill on the morning of the 19th of April, there were present companies or parts of companies from Concord and from the adjacent towns, her daughters; but what with the mixture of regular militia and minute men, and the fact that so many of Concord's men were absent from the field in the morning, engaged in the paramount duty of removing to places of greater security the precious stores of war material, the loss of which would be a severer blow to the patriot cause than would be any merely military defeat, it is not to be wondered at that, as Shattuck says, "none of the companies were formed in regular order."

It can never be known with any certainty, who of the Concord soldiers were at the bridge when the fight took place there. We have no muster rolls of the two militia companies, and there are many names preserved by tradition as having borne arms on that day which are not to be found in the lists I have read; most of these persons were doubtless militiamen, like Thaddeus Blood, who died in 1844, and is recorded as "the last man in this town that was at Concord Fight."

For many hours before the arrival of the British soldiers, every man in the town (practically) had been actively engaged in carting away to Stow and Acton and Littleton, and even farther, the provisions and military stores of which the town had been the place of deposit. As the feeble and scattered line began to form itself on the further side of the river,

these men came back from their errand singly or in small groups, and sought as nearly as they could their proper place in the ranks. Many of them of course did not get back at all until after the little skirmish at the bridge was over. But even those did their duty as much, and doubtless with much the same spirit, as did our Captain Charles Miles, who, we are told, went into the battle with the same feelings with which he went to church. The safety of the military stores and supplies was the all-important object, which by vote of the Provincial Congress had been made the especial duty of Colonel James Barrett. If this object could have been secured without firing a gun, Colonel Barrett and his men would have been better pleased, for the hastily formed, undisciplined and straggling little army was far from being prepared, in any respect of personnel or of war material, to lock horns with the royal regiments, even if it had known how much of military incompetence was concentrated in the brain of the British General-in-Chief. It was General Gage's absolutely colossal faculty of blundering that precipitated Concord Fight and the siege of Boston. The patriots had been inclined to give him some credit as a strategist and as a tactician, and would willingly have postponed for a time the wager of battle. This was evidently the meaning of the often repeated and somewhat supererogatory protestations of loyalty to "our gracious sovereign, King George the Third."

But if fighting must be precipitated, we cannot doubt that every captain of minute men in the entire Province was equally ready to declare, and equally

justified in declaring, with Captain Isaac Davis of Acton, that he "hadn't a man that was afraid to go." You remember that besides Captain Davis, Captain Smith of Lincoln and Captain Wilson of Bedford had their companies at the scene of action before the invading expedition got here, and that Captain Parker had his men out on the Lexington Common before that expedition had got out of the mud of East Cambridge.

But to come back again within hailing distance of our text; we have seen that the Minute Men were to hold themselves in readiness at all times "at a minute's warning, with arms and ammunition." So strictly was this construed, that, on the authority of tradition, it is stated that no man, after being duly mustered in, allowed himself to be separated from his arms for one moment, sleeping or waking. At church, at the shop, on the farm or at the market, the trusty gun, that had perhaps seen service at Louisbourg thirty years before, or in Nova Scotia in 1755, or had been carried by one of Colonel John Cuming's men in the Northern expedition of 1758, or by one of Colonel Jonathan Hoar's soldiers during the closing campaign of the French war in 1760, now carefully repaired and put in order for another spell of activity, stood always ready to its owner's hand. What the new army of freedom lacked in the niceties of military drill, it made up for in knowing something of marksmanship; what it wanted in formality, it compensated for in constant readiness and watchfulness.

The men were to be assembled for drill twice in each week, for three hours at each time, at *1s.*

8d., afterward increased to 2s., for each attendance, not a high rate of pay, as we look at things today, especially as each man found his own gun, the "cartouch-box" alone being furnished at public expense. Still, compared with what the town was then paying for labor on the roads, and with the ordinary going rates for mechanics' labor, it is probably as much money as the most of them would have earned at their regular vocations. A few of the men had no firearms, and no funds to buy any, and they were provided at the public expense; only fifteen of them in all, for in those days every farmer and mechanic owned some sort of a gun, and generally knew how to shoot fairly well with it. That was a point in which the rebels had a decided advantage over the King's troops, among whom marksmanship was considered no part of a soldier's qualifications. (Even since the American Civil War of less than forty years ago, a general officer of the English army has declared in print, in the pages of the *United Service Gazette*, that "all that is necessary for an enlisted man to know about shooting is to be able to point his gun straight in front of him, and pull the trigger.")

Among the arms which the Province had caused to be deposited at Concord, General Gage's spies found here, as by their report to that commander, "fourteen pieces of cannon (ten iron and four brass) and two coehorns," or small mortars. Forty of the Town's soldiers were detailed "to learn the exercise of the cannon," and were called the Alarm Company. There is no separate list of their names, but I find one recorded reference to George Minott as Captain

of the Alarm Company, so I conclude that this company was not really of minute men, but was one of the regular militia companies of the town. They could not have learned much of the artillery exercise in the few weeks of late winter and early spring that were open to them, and, so far as I have been able to discover, none of the Concord names appear on the lists of "matrosses" in the army at Cambridge after the investment of Boston began.

It was only two days before the fight at the bridge, that the Province Committee of Safety, then in session here, directed Colonel James Barrett to have two of the cannon mounted for use, and the others conveyed further into the country, and on the morning of the 19th four of them were hastily deported to Stow, and six of them were carried to the outer districts of the town and carefully concealed. It is a tradition that some of them were hidden on Colonel Barrett's farm by laying them in a furrow of a field that was being ploughed, and turning another furrow over on them, and that this operation was performed while the detachment of British soldiers that had been to search the Colonel's place were in plain sight of the field. Three of the largest guns, twenty-four pounders, perhaps too heavy to be quickly got out of the way, were captured by the British in the village and disabled, —but not so thoroughly that they could not be repaired.

The existence of the organization of the Minute Men, as such, was short, though their enlistment was originally for the term of ten months. With the shutting up of General Gage's army in Boston and

the establishment of the siege of that place, their work was practically over. Their organization was plainly meant to be merely temporary,—to provide for a force of men who should remain in their own homes, and pursue their regular employments, but who should be ready at all times to meet the first alarm of danger and face the first shock of battle,—and nobly and bravely did they perform that duty, not only the Minute Men of Concord, but those of every other town in the Province. But for the tedious life in an established camp,—for the trying duty of keeping watch over a strong and resourceful enemy and preventing his escape from the trap into which his own foolishness had led him,—for the hard practical conditions of a besieging army—there was needed a firmer and more military body, with more perfect organization and a more conventional standard of discipline. So the minute men gradually faded away, and even before the battle of Bunker Hill, only two months later, we find most of the commissions vacant and the companies largely broken up. A large part, indeed, much the larger part, of the men re-entered the service, but it was in newly constructed companies, and in very many cases with new officers. In the case of some companies, this change was almost imperceptible, and in all it appears to have been gradual, and it was not until the war was well advanced, certainly not until after the Northern campaign of 1777, that the “minute man” spirit and influence may be said to have finally lapsed.

In the beginning of this paper, I spoke of some other Concord documents in Dr. Clark’s collection.

They have nothing to do with the minute men or with the American revolution, but they are of some interest to us, nevertheless. One of them, the most valuable by far, was an original manuscript account of the celebrated Lovewell's Fight with the Indians at Pequawket in 1725, in the handwriting of Eleazer Melvin of Concord, who with six others from this place, of whom two were killed and two were wounded, had a conspicuous share in that disastrous battle. This is the only contemporaneous account of the fight, written by one of the participants, that has come down to our day. It has never been printed, and has been entirely unknown. It was doubtless the basis of the Rev. Thos. Symmes' universally accepted historical account, for Mr. Symmes follows Melvin's manuscript *verbatim* in several pages. This paper also brought a fabulous price at the sale, and like the list of Captain Miles' minute men, is now forever out of our reach. Another paper that was in Dr. Clark's possession twenty-five years ago, was a portion of the records of the old District of Carlisle; these leaves turned up later in the Woburn Public Library, from which, I think, they have since been redeemed.

All these papers were bought by Dr. Clark for a very small sum, from a Lowell junk dealer about 1863. At that time paper and paper-stock were enormously high; more than three times as much as before the war, and about twelve times as much as now. Country attics were rummaged by frugal and thrifty housewives, to whom the temptation of ten or twelve cents a pound for a lot of musty old letters and account books that had cluttered up the garrets for

years, was irresistible. There was *money* in these old things, and the good, ignorant people never stopped to think, indeed, they did not *know* enough to think, that they might even have a higher value than for mere paper rags. Here and there was a junk man who did know something, or who had fallen in with some antiquary who had a liking for old documents,—and those junk men got rich. But for the most part the stuff was hauled away to the nearest paper mill and converted into pulp. It fairly brings the tears to one's eyes to think how many priceless documents, how much of the raw material of history, was irrecoverably disposed of in that way—and how little there is now left.

All these papers of Dr. Clark's came in a lot of such stuff cleared out as waste paper from the house once occupied by John Hartwell, Clerk of *Old* Carlisle, and by several generations of his descendants. Captain Miles' muster roll is in the handwriting of David Hartwell, orderly sergeant of the company, and son of this John. A Melvin marriage in the Hartwell tribe brought Captain Eleazer's account of the Lovewell Fight into the Hartwell house. This accounts for all these papers, and for their preservation down to the time they got into the hands of the Lowell junk man, whose acquaintance I am sorry not to have made thirty-eight years ago, as Dr. Clark found him a very valuable and profitable addition to *his* circle of acquaintance.

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